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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY	Tibet/China	REPORT NO.	[REDACTED]	25X1A
SUBJECT	Activities of Chinese Communist Troops at Kochar Fort, Tibet	DATE DISTR.	23 December 1953	
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THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
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(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

SOURCE: [REDACTED]

1. During late October and early November 1953 there was increased Chinese Communist military activity at Kochar Fort, in Tibet not far from the north-west corner of Nepal. During the first week of November a contingent of approximately 500 additional Chinese Communist troops reached the fort, bringing with them a large amount of equipment, including 12 small cannons and more than 100 Sten guns. The men were all equipped with rifles. Their equipment, which included a large supply of ammunition, was transported on horses, mules, yaks and camels. Among their equipment were ball-like flares, which, when thrown up into the air at night, gave a bright light over a wide area which lasts for about five or ten minutes.² The light from these flares was so bright that one could see a needle lying on the ground.
2. The Chinese Communist troops at Kochar Fort had shipped to Kochar enough fuel to last for at least a year, as well as all kinds of dried vegetables and dried meat. During late October and November military stores, both of ammunition and food, were constantly arriving at Kochar. Their supplies have made the garrison generally self-sufficient, and independent of local sources of supply.
3. The Chinese Communists established a radio-telephone system in Kochar Monastery, and in early November were able to make daily contact with the Chinese Communist forces at Taklakhar (N 30-15, E 81-10) and at Lake Manasarowar (N 30-40, E 81-25).
4. The Chinese Communists also maintained a regular courier service between Kochar Fort and the Chinese Communist garrison at Manasarowar and Taklakhar. These couriers traveled on horseback, accompanied by from two to four Tibetans, also mounted. Efforts had been made to intercept these couriers by anti-Chinese Communist Tibetans, but on each occasion the attackers had been shot and their bodies disposed of by the Chinese Communists.

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(Note: Washington Distribution Indicated By "X"; Field Distribution By "#".)

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- 2 -

5. During the last week in October 1953 the Chinese Communists at Kochar Fort started constructing two large buildings which were to accommodate troops and provide storage room for military equipment and other supplies. More than a thousand Tibetan and Chinese laborers were employed in the construction of these buildings, with the Tibetans working on the outside parts, and the Chinese laborers doing the inside work.
6. During November 1953 there were six Russian surveyors at Kochar Fort.³ Surveying units, each composed of a Russian leader and a group of Chinese soldiers, were working in the area around the fort. The Russians usually went about on horseback.
7. The Chinese Communist soldiers at Kochar Fort were receiving daily training in mountain warfare. Their drills and exercises began at eight in the morning and continued until noon. More training was given each afternoon for a couple of hours, and again each evening for three or four hours.
8. Among the Chinese soldiers in the Kochar garrison there were some who showed dissatisfaction at their assignment and wished to return to their homes in China. They expressed the opinion that Tibet was a God-forsaken place, and that the Tibetans were, beneath the surface, hostile and unfriendly to the Chinese. Some of these soldiers indicated a readiness to escape to India, but were hesitant to attempt desertion without money or assistance in crossing the frontier into Nepal or India.
9. In their dealings with the civilian population at Kochar, the Chinese Communist troops were pleasant and helpful. They always exhibited respect for lamas, both young and old, though most of the older lamas were known to be anti-Chinese, if not anti-Communist as well. The military labor corps attached to Kochar Fort, which devoted most of its time to the cultivation of fallow lands, distributed a portion of its harvest of grain to the villagers and to Kochar Monastery. Both the soldiers and their officers used their off-duty hours to spread propaganda among the local population, usually turning the discussion first to the current economic conditions in Tibet, then to economic conditions in Communist China, making an attempt to demonstrate that since China has a Communist government, economic conditions have greatly improved. In addition to these individual propaganda activities, Kochar Fort maintained a special propaganda unit divided into a number of squads composed of a leader and four men. These squads would go from hamlet to hamlet, from dawn to sunset, holding meetings and describing conditions in China under the Communist regime. At least one soldier in each squad was able to speak and write correct Tibetan.
10. When the propaganda squads or individual Chinese Communist soldiers visited Kochar Monastery, their behavior was consistently polite. They often spent time in prayer at the Monastery, and always made payment for the hospitality offered by the monks in cash, or with presents of food.

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Comments

- 25X1A 1. In [REDACTED] Kochar was described as near Simikot (N 29-58, E 81-50) and three days' journey west of Manasarowar. Available information indicates that it is about 12 miles from Taklakhar. The fort was described in [REDACTED] and its garrison in October 1953 was reported as 1,200 soldiers in addition to a civilian staff of 100.
- 25X1A 2. The duration of the light of these flares or star shells may be exaggerated.
- 25X1A 3. In [REDACTED] the number of Russians at Kochar Fort was reported as five.

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